A writ petition has been filed before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court challenging the validity of the amendment.

Availability of LPG cylinders at Fair Price Shops for BPL families

*391. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Union Government to issue orders permitting distribution of LPG cylinders to the Below Poverty Line families through Fair Price Shops by storing upto 7 cylinders in each F.P. shop at any point of time which could be distributed without any license, as 28 lakh BPL families who had been given gas connections, are not in a position to go to far-off places, where Agencies are located for Gas Refills; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) There was a proposal from Andhra Pradesh Government to permit the distribution of LPG cylinders to the beneficiaries under the State Government's Deepam Scheme through Fair Price Shop (FPS) dealers by storing upto 6 cylinders at any point of time without any licence. However, this proposal was not supported by the Public Sector Oil Marketing companies (OMCs) *inter-alia* on account of the following reasons:-

(i) It would be difficult to keep a check on the diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for unauthorized commercial use.

(ii) At present, OMCs make delivered supplies of filled cylinders to the distributors' godowns. Additional transportation costs from the distributor's godown to each of the sub-distributors locations would need to be worked out separately. The issue of sharing of distributor's commission between the existing distributor and the proposed sub-distributor would also need to be settled. The inclusion of these costs in the price would made the monitoring of end selling prices difficult.

(iii) It would be difficult to enforce the observance of safe practices by the FPS owners.

(iv) The necessary infrastructure and expertise for attending to leakage complaints and other associated services would need to be developed at FPS.

At present the OMCs are following the methodology given below for marketing domestic LPG in rural and far flung areas in the country:-

(i) LPG cylinders are carried to approved extension points operated by the distributor in the rural and far flung areas. Customers take refill supplies from these points.

(ii) Distributors' vehicle carrying filled cylinders go about covering various areas as per the required frequency for effecting supplies to customers. The retail selling price charged is based on the Government approved tariff structure for transportation.

Amount spent by Oil Companies

*392. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount spent by the Public Sector Oil Companies during 2004-05;

(b) whether it is a fact that these oil companies have spent more amount than the budgeted; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR) : (a) to (c) The details of Planned Capital Budget Estimates (BE) and Revised Estimates (RE) *vis-a-vis* the actual amouint spent by the major public sector oil companies during the year 2004-05 are as under: